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"I wish to be a Christian first."—Page 41.

THE
BORROWED - BIBLE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "EVE BOURNE," "BEACONS AND
BECKONINGS," "THE ELDEST DAUGHTER," &C.

[Sara H. Browne]

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THE BORROWED BIBLE.

CHAPTER I.

MICHAEL CARRISFORTH belonged to the better class of Irish tenantry in the county of S. He farmed a few noble and fertile acres with such skill, thrift and economy, that his crops were finer and more bountiful than most of his neighbors'. Indeed Michael's husbandry was well reported of far and near, and his produce never failed to be in demand, or to bring the highest price in the market. Consequently his family were regarded as looking up in the world; and so they were, in more senses than one. More than ordinary intelligence characterized them from oldest to youngest; and with the increasing means of procuring knowledge, came the desire to break those bonds of ignorance and superstition, under which the Catholic peasantry of that

green and beautiful Island have been so long and vainly struggling. Never can it be done, however, while the masses of her laboring people are in slavish subjection to a priesthood, whose object, aim, and interest it is, to hold fast the key of knowledge ! But a better day is coming for Ireland ; its dawn is even now perceptible in the dim horizon of the future.

Michael Carrisforth meant to be a good man—as he accounted goodness. He was scrupulously honest and honorable in all his dealings, and brought up his children to be so. He paid his rents and rates duly ; he provided well for his household, and was a kind husband and an indulgent father. He went to church on Sundays and festival days, kept Lent, ate no meat on Fridays, and confessed once a year. With this external conformity he was entirely satisfied—receiving, like thousands of others, the doctrines, and observing the rites of the Church of Rome, with the utmost indifference, but without question or cavil.

His wife Bessie, on the other hand, was deeply tinctured by the religious superstition of her people. With conscientious zeal she entered into every thing of a sacred nature. She had an awe of the priestly character and person—blindly ascribing to it all that power and sanctity it has long had the arrogance and impiety to claim. She believed in her heart that the Roman Catholic church contained the only true means of God's grace and salvation, and really pitied and prayed for those without its pale. She confessed, as a grievous transgression, the slightest departure from prescribed rules, whether the result of accident or inadvertence; and gladly restored herself to the favor of heaven, and her spiritual directors, by the most rigorous penances. And thus she tried to bring up her children—instilling into their young minds the feelings and faith, which were so actively predominant in her own.

Michael's indifference to religion (as she regarded the fact of his not having formally united himself to the church,) was the one

grand point at issue between them before their marriage. It was in vain that he insisted he was a *Christian*, having been baptized in infancy. Nothing could satisfy her but a public recognition of the obligations entered into for him by his sponsors—and this she required of him, before she would consent to become his wife.

The Papists believe that all who enter into the communion of their church, are by that fact made believers, and are safe for eternity, whatever their character and conduct may have been previously. They pretend, that there is some efficiency in the rites and sacraments themselves, to convert the sinner into a saint. When Michael Carrisforth had done this, he had no more to do to win his bride, and they were soon married. Bessie believed she had saved his soul; and although he proved not quite so zealous in the faith as herself, she felt quite safe about him for time and eternity.

We might now comment on this, as well as many other soul-deluding principles and practices of the Romish church: but we

prefer to let our little story speak its own moral to the young readers. Enough has been written in exposure and condemnation of those hollow and pernicious doctrines, which have lulled the fears and stimulated the false hopes, of thousands on thousands, till at last their feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and the light of eternity reveals their terrible mistake.

CHAPTER II.

YEARS passed along, and Michael and Bessie had become the parents of a fine family of healthy, ruddy boys and girls. Prosperity, too, had attended them, as it is very apt to do those who are patiently and perseveringly industrious; and it was a matter of pride and complacency to see their children better fed, clad, and taught, than the greater part of their neighbors.' Michael loved to see them noticed, and hear them praised by every body, for their clean rosy cheeks, tidy apparel, and civil and respectful demeanor. Bessie most enjoyed the commendations of Father Gasheen, the parish priest, for their punctuality and orderly behavior in church, and the promptness with which they recited their catechism, creed, and prayers. She listened with the liveliest satisfaction, to his encomiums on her maternal faithfulness in for-

tifying their tender minds against heterodoxy and heresy thus early ; and promised, with prophetic confidence, that they should one day become lights and pillars in the only true and Apostolic Church of Rome ! Upon Connell, the eldest, he bestowed unusual attention, and lavished unqualified praise. And Connell was a peculiarly engaging and intelligent lad ; and for his opportunities a rare scholar and reasoner. In the parish school he was always first in his class ; indeed, for some years, he had been regarded first in school, and not unfrequently a match for the master himself. But his disposition was so amiable and obliging that he was a general favorite, and his superiority and successes excited neither envy nor ill-will.

As this youth is to be the principal subject of our sketch, it is proper that we should introduce him to the particular acquaintance of our readers. He was now about fifteen—tall, robust, and vigorous, with a very active and earnest mind, as a counterpart to a healthful body. He could

labor all day long on the little farm without fatigue, and look forward to the evening hours for relaxation, with his slate, books, and papers. In the dwellings of such in Ireland as occupy his station in life, books are not very abundant—but somehow or other, by means quite inexplicable to the rest of the family, young Connell managed to supply himself with reading. Any thing and every thing he could beg, buy, or borrow, was eagerly devoured by the boy; and being favored with a very retentive memory, he by-and-bye became quite a prodigy of information among the villagers. He was often called upon to explain or elucidate subjects, which, to their more limited resources, appeared quite dark or difficult; and this he did in so pleasant and unassuming a way, as still more to commend himself to their confidence and affection. As Papists, they would often start some question, involving the doctrines, practices, traditions, or requisitions of their church. This led Connell to look deeper into these things, than the Catechism or

Prayer Book would conduct him. Father Gasheen lent him works upon ecclesiastical history, as well as volumes containing traditional accounts of early times—lives of saints and martyrs, writings of the Fathers and Popes, &c., all of which this singular lad perused by firelight, or a dim candle, after the rest of the family were sunk in sleep. It was not so much that he felt a peculiar interest in these subjects, or this species of reading—no indeed; he thought it very dry and unattractive—nor had he yet learned to raise a doubt in regard to the boasted infallibility of the Romish church; he wished to be ready with an answer, or an explanation, for those who might make inquiries of him—he had gained a reputation for being bright and knowing, and he was quite anxious to prove that he deserved it. He had grown quite unwilling, even at the age of fifteen, to say “he didn’t know,” on any common subject!

But these researches were all made in hours of leisure, or at times when boys of his age are wont to give themselves to

sport. Connell worked diligently on the farm with his father and brothers. He knew how to plough, to sow, to mow, and to reap. He went to market, and was expert in all sorts of business belonging to his occupation. He kept the accounts; and, being ready in figures, he was frequently entrusted with the pecuniary affairs of the family—buying, selling, and bartering. It was as much Connell's ambition, to be competent to do business in the best manner, as to answer the questions, and resolve the doubts of his neighbors. And so we see him most industriously exerting his bodily energies by day, and ministering to his mental cravings by night; and when we see a young person doing thus, we are fully justified in expecting that time will develope in him quite remarkable traits.

CHAPTER III.

HARVEST days had commenced. The first ripened grain had been cut; the early fruits and vegetables were ready for market. It was a bustling and busy morning at the Carrisforth cottage. The mother and her girls were astir betimes; some to milk the cows, some to churn the butter or make the curds, some to prepare an early breakfast. Michael and his boys were loading the market wagon, with various products of the field and garden. All was ready before the horn summoned them to the morning meal.

“Let me see,” said Michael, as he sat down to the table, “our last load came to two pound three and sixpence, you say, Connie. Squire Harty’s man bought it all, and didn’t pay. That must be seen to, to-day. I guess I had better go with you. That Ned is a slippery fellow, they tell me;

and if he shouldn't bring the money, I shall think there's something wrong about the trade."

"I presume I can manage it, father, but just as you prefer," replied Connell.

"Why you see, boy, that if the cash isn't forthcoming, I shall take the team, and just ride over to the Squire's, while you dispose of the load."

"Yes, yes, sir," assented Connell, pleased enough to find, that he was not to be disappointed in that part of their errand, which he most enjoyed.

They mounted the wagon, and stirred up the sleek farm horses into a lazy trot.

The market town was some half dozen miles distant. It was duly reached, and as Michael had feared, there was occasion for him to leave the load in his son's charge, while he rode on to collect the "two pound three and sixpence."

Connell was accustomed to the business, and soon made a profitable disposal of his beets, beans, turnips, and squashes. Many of the market men had a kind and pleasant

word for the lad, even if they had no dealings; for his straightforward honesty, and manly bearing, had before been noticed and commended, as something quite uncommon in a boy of his age and station. His perfect accuracy in reckoning, his correctness in making accounts, settling bills and effecting exchanges, had often been remarked upon. One individual, whom we will call Mr. Bentley, had had his eye upon the youth for some time past. He kept a stall for fruit and vegetables, and had frequently dealt with his father and himself; and always enjoyed a chat with Connell whenever his engagements would allow. Mr. Bentley was an excellent man, a Protestant, and a very earnest Christian.

On this day, Connell had the good fortune to sell his entire stock of produce to Mr. Bentley, whom he liked best to trade with, of any man in the market. It chanced that Mr. Bentley was very much hurried with customers, when he made out the payment; and when Connell ran his eye over the bill, and counted the money, he

instantly discovered that he had received several shillings too much. He waited till Mr. Bentley was disengaged, and then approached him.

"Sir," said he, respectfully, "this money is not quite right. Will you have the goodness to look for yourself?"

"Not right? How so? haven't I paid you enough? Let me look again at the bill;" said Mr. Bentley, holding out his hand for it.

Connell presented it, and then smilingly produced the money. "'There's a mistake, sir, you will see. Here is a guinea and six and sixpence, and the bill amounts to only thirty shillings and sixpence. The difference is yours, instead of mine, sir, I believe!"

Mr. Bentley looked very much pleased. "A bit of a mistake in my favor, is it then? well, I was quite unprepared for such a mistake, my customers are not very apt to mention those; but if one occurs on the other side, I am sure to hear of it. Four shillings! well, I don't wonder I make


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mistakes sometimes. But as you have discovered, and so honestly made it appear, you are entitled to the balance. I will call it right as it is, and commend you for your integrity besides."

"No, I thank you, sir," said Connell, earnestly, but resolutely; "I do not choose to take a reward for doing only what is right. Here is the change, sir, if you please!"

Mr. Bentley was more and more surprised; he took the money because he saw that the lad's nice sensibilities would be wounded if he refused. But he determined to improve the opportunity to learn something of his history and prospects. Accordingly he invited Connell to be seated; and in the intervals of serving his customers asked him a great many questions, which elicited a degree of good sense, information, and intelligence, altogether unexpected, and certainly very rare indeed among youth of his parentage and condition. He gathered from him what slender educational advantages he had enjoyed, and what means of relig-

ious instruction, and drew him, by gentle and shrewd advances, to express his feelings, hopes, plans, and wishes.

"Well, my lad," resumed Mr. Bentley, "I see you are capable of becoming a valuable and useful man in the world. Should you not like to do a great deal of good among your fellow creatures before you die?"

"That I should, sir," answered Connell, his eyes sparkling with the new thought. "How can I? please tell me, sir."

"You have many endowments which will aid you essentially—but yet you lack one all important thing."

"What's that, sir? I should very much like to know?" inquired Connell, modestly.

"*Religion!*" replied Mr. Bentley, solemnly. "You want a new heart, and the grace of God that bringeth salvation!"

"Oh, I am a Christian already, sir. I've been baptized and—"

"I understand you perfectly, my young friend. You mean you are a Christian in the Roman Catholic sense. We, Protest-

ants, believe that no one is a Christian, but he who has received the grace of God for himself, into his own heart, and by penitence and faith embraces Christ as his only Mediator, and Redeemer. Do you think you have really done this, Connell?"

To this unexpected query Connell found it difficult to reply; and Mr. Bentley went on.

"The Christian, too, should draw his rule of belief from those pure and simple teachings which Christ came to bring. Have you ever read the Bible, my boy?"

Mr. Bentley had spoken with that feeling and tenderness, which totally disarms prejudice and opposition. Connell could only reply, that he had never seen a Bible!

"I thought it very likely," said Mr. Bentley, "and now why is this? Tell me, if you can, why this precious depository of Divine truths; this simple and beautiful directory of human faith and hope, should be so sedulously withholden from the common people by your priests and prelates?"

"We cannot understand it, sir—we are too ignorant—the priests tell us about it, and explain what is necessary for us to believe."

"Do they?" repeated Mr. Bentley, "I am very much constrained to doubt it. I thought so once—I was educated so to believe, but when at last I read the Bible for myself, I found I had been deceived and deluded. Would you like to see a Bible?"

"Yes, sir, indeed I would," replied Connell, eagerly.

"Would you read it, if you had it in your possession?"

"Certainly, sir, I would very gladly examine the Bible for myself."

"Well, I have but one, and that cost me dear—but if you will promise to read it through, with candor and attention, I will put it in your hands. I will not give it to you, lest some one might destroy it, knowing as I do the opposition of the priests to its circulation;—and I wonder not at all at this; for where the Bible freely circulates, their power and influence is at an end! I

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say I will lend you my precious Bible;—when you have read it, bring it to me again!”

Connell promised it should be well read, well kept, and faithfully returned to its owner. Mr. Bentley then took from a desk near by, a Bible, well worn indeed, but entire, and handed it to the youth. He received it with a feeling of awe, and wrapping it in a piece of clean matting, deposited it in the bottom of one of the deep market baskets. He had barely time to do so, when his father drove up to the door, and they were soon on the road home.

## CHAPTER IV.

It would be very difficult for our young readers to understand the mingled emotions of curiosity and solemnity, which Connell experienced, when he first took his Bible in hand, to examine its contents. It was a feeling something akin to that which was wont to come over him, when he witnessed the elevation of the host; or that mysterious ceremony, by which the Roman priesthood pretend, that the simple sacramental emblems of bread and wine are converted into the veritable body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he had seen that many and many a time, till it had lost all novelty to him—the Bible he had never seen or touched before!

He waited till all the family had retired, before he removed it from its place of concealment in the great vegetable basket. He

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was unwilling to excite prejudice, or opposition, by making known the precious acquisition he had made. He knew his mother's violent antipathy to every thing which savored of Protestantism too well, to run that risk, even if his father should take no notice of the thing; and as it was his frequent custom to spend evenings in reading, he knew this mode and time of investigation would occasion neither surprise nor inquiry.

We must repeat, that few of our youthful readers can appreciate the state of mind, with which our friend Connell seated himself before the broad kitchen fire-place, and stirred the sticks that were half-burnt for a better light to look into his Bible. So common and so plentiful is this treasure in our happy and intelligent Christian communities, that we greatly fear it is not regarded with the sacredness it claims as the Word of God! How many thousand children there are among us, who never knew the lack of a Bible, who never entered a house where there was not a Bible! who never

realized, that there could be any more dearth of what has been so familiar to their eyes and ears, ever since they were born ! Ah, dear little friends, we tremble lest this very commonness of a great blessing has tended to diminish its value in your esteem. But is it not wrong, very wrong, if it be indeed so ? You do not think less of comfortable food, raiment, light and air, because they are God's daily ministers to your bodily necessities. Will you then lightly regard this blessed provision for the soul's nourishment and need ?

The cheapness of the Bible in these days too, should be a matter of devout gratitude, instead of indifference. We are very apt to attach a high value to what is rare and costly—but here is a priceless treasure in our hands, and how little do we cherish it. Very few in ancient days could afford to own a Bible, even if copies had been plenty. The labor and time it took to transcribe with a pen all the chapters and verses from Genesis to Revelation, (for that was the way Bibles were multiplied before the art



of printing was discovered) made the price so enormously high, that they were entirely out of the reach of the poor. That *parish* was well off which owned one copy, and could keep it chained in the church, where the few who could read might go and consult its sacred pages. Even twenty-five or thirty years ago, at the time when the events related in our narrative occurred, the Bible was a costly book in Ireland, far more so than we should imagine, from its cheapness and abundance among us.—These considerations, and a great many others, should tend to make the Bible more revered and valued than it is; more carefully studied and more scrupulously cherished in our hearts and homes, and beget a more generous desire to send it into those “dark places of the earth full of the habitations of cruelty,” where none of its glorious beams have yet penetrated. “Freely ye have received, freely give.”

All this while Connell is intently absorbed in looking into his Bible. The light is dim and fitful, but it serves to show him that

he has got hold of a most wonderful book. He has read the title-page, the preface, the table of contents, as should always be done, in order to get a clear idea of the plan and design of a book. He now enters on the sacred text, and is almost startled by the sublime abruptness of the inspired historian, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth; and the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep!"

On, on, he read, with a momentarily increasing wonder and interest. When he had finished the account of the mighty work of creation, he paused and breathed deeply. "So this is the way the world and every thing was made," he said to himself. "How great and powerful a Being God must be! I never knew this before, only by hearsay;—why should it be kept from us? Why shouldn't we read it for ourselves, and know all about it, instead of now and then getting a hint of it, such as the priests may choose to give us!"

On he read—the fire was quite burnt out—he lighted a candle, and went rapidly along. The first transgression, the expulsion from Paradise, the murder of Abel and exile of Cain, the flood, the building of Babel, the story of Abraham, etc., so riveted his attention, that he was wholly unaware how the night hours were passing. The candle sunk lower and lower, and finally expired in its socket. Connell started up at this, and looked about; the first streak of gray dawn was beginning to show itself in the east! He crept silently to his bed in the loft, for a short nap before the house was astir. But the contents of the wonderful book he had been poring over, so occupied his thoughts that he found sleep quite impossible; and after carefully locking his treasure in his own little trunk, he descended to commence the ordinary duties of the morning.

Harvest work was hard and pressing all through those long warm August and September days. It called the husbandman

early from his pillow, and sent him thither at night late and weary. Michael Carrisforth's cottage afforded no shelter for idlers in this busiest of seasons. The hum of the hive, and the incessant activity of its winged tenants, afforded no unapt comparison with them, and furnished them no unregarded example. And none labored with a heartier cheerfulness, or a more persevering diligence, than did young Connell, day after day; while a large portion of the night was consumed in the manner just described.

But none knew his secret, nor was any one aware of the vigils he kept. He grew more sober and thoughtful, however, and talked less while he thought a great deal more. His father and brothers laughed and chatted over their toil, and wondered he did not join their gayety as usual. Once in a while they tried to rally him, and inquired if he were getting vapory—but if he banished his serious reflections for a time, and made mirth for the harvest hands, his

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thoughts would insensibly revert to the same subjects again—the grand themes of the Bible !

And thus passed the harvest time and the autumn—but long before its close, Connell had read through his “wonderful book !”

## CHAPTER V.

It would seem (as has been before remarked) that the Romanists are fully aware of the effect, which the free diffusion of the Bible among their people would produce. So sure are they of this effect, that we can wonder little at the jealous care with which it is withholden, thus guarding one grand avenue to religious liberty, light, and knowledge. "The entrance of thy Word giveth light," declares the Psalmist, and well they know the declaration to be true.

In such a heart as young Connell Corrisforth's, the seeds of truth thus sown could not long remain dormant. They stirred within him a tumult of difficulty, doubt, and bewilderment. "If this book be true," he rightly reasoned, "if this be really the word of God, if these be indeed the doctrines and duties which the blessed Jesus came to teach, then have we been deceived ;

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for we have been taught very differently—we have been instructed to believe things, and conform to rites and observe ceremonies, which are here nowhere authorized or enjoined! I can't tell how it is—I am in great perplexity, perhaps I do not understand aright—but one thing I know—if this Bible is right, then we are wrong, that's certain. But how shall I find out? I will ask Mr. Bentley—he can tell me something more upon the subject—but then he's a Protestant, why should I go to him? Mother thinks the Protestants are bad people."

It so happened that Mr. Bentley was either not to be seen, or too busy for conversation, whenever Connell went to market for many weeks, and he had no opportunity to speak with him, as he certainly would have been glad to do, notwithstanding his Protestantism: for the burden at his heart grew nothing lighter as time wore on, and he felt that he really needed aid to resolve his doubts and quiet his anxieties. Another feeling began to be predominant in his breast. If the Bible spoke truly, then

it became evident that he, Connell Carrisforth, was a great sinner before God! Did it not say so? Did it not declare that "*all* have sinned and come short of the glory of God?" Did it not say, "The soul that sinneth it shall die?" It was this settled and growing conviction which most troubled him. It made him feel unsafe and uncomfortable, and at times distressed and despairing—what could he do? He knew well enough what the church of Rome prescribed, in its doctrines of confession, penance, and meritorious acts for the penitent—but somehow he turned with disgust and loathing from a system which could not in any wise meet his case. His faith in Romanism was shaken to its foundations; but still he found no anchoring place for his soul. He knew not yet what Protestantism or Christianity was—a kind of vague uncertainty kept his thoughts in perpetual disquietude. He still read the borrowed Bible, and tried to apprehend its meaning—and the more he read, the more thoroughly convinced he became, of the incongruity


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between its teachings and those of the church. Which then was right? Which wrong? Which was true? Which false?—for both could not be.

The troubled state of his mind and heart began to be apparent in his countenance. He grew pale and thin—strength and appetite diminished. Bessie was a kind and tender mother, and dearly loved her first-born. She began to be alarmed at the change, and thinking he had been overtasked, she insisted that he should be allowed time to recruit. Connell protested that he was well and in no need of recreation—he would much prefer to work as he was accustomed to do!—It availed nothing with Bessie.

“Come, boy—you needn’t stand there talking—you arn’t going to work one stroke this day—just go and rest and amuse yourself.”

“But, mother, the potatoes——”

“I and the girls will go into the potato patch before you shall, Connell, dear,” interrupted the kind Bessie, decidedly. “It’s

not well that ye are, or you'd never be looking so haggard-like. Come, away to the play-ground, or where ye like."

Connell smiled, and was about to offer some farther objections; but Bessie stamped her foot.

"Niver a word—niver a word! I know better than yourself how you ought to look! Haven't I watched that face of yours ever since it was no bigger than the palm of my hand? It's no use talking—but, I say, go and enjoy yourself, and let the blush come back to your cheeks, and the spark to your eyes! Out, I say to ye!"

But Connell moved reluctantly to do her bidding. He longed to tell her that it was the mind, instead of the body, which needed medicine and repose. But he knew full well it would only excite her severest rebuke and displeasure, so he resolved still to keep his secret, and went forth obediently from the cottage.

But a day of release from toil did not, as we may well suppose, bring any exemption from inward perturbation. It only allowed

a more direct and continued subjection to its powers, and Connell grew more heart-sick, the less his hands were employed. "How can I enjoy myself?" he said to himself, as he sat down on a stone by the road-side—"I wish I had never seen the Bible—I was happy before, and merry all day long. Now—oh, how I have to think, and think, and never stop—how wretched it makes me, and then to have such terrible forebodings;—‘after death the judgment!’ Oh, I am afraid I shall finally sink into the perdition of ungodly men—for certainly I have done nothing but sin, sin, sin all my life! Oh, where shall I go and what shall I do?"

Tears dropped from poor Connell's eyes, but just then that beautiful and encouraging invitation of the dear Saviour occurred to him—"Come unto me all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

"This is what I want! This is just

what I want," said he, starting to his feet ;  
"but how, *how* shall I come, and where?"

At this moment he heard voices in an adjoining field, and presently a man came over the stile into the highway, near where he was, and passed on without observing him.

"That's Father Gasheen—and he has dropped a parcel in crossing the stile—I'll make haste, and hand it to him before he misses it."

Connell picked up a small package that looked like a book, and hurried after Father Gasheen. In a few minutes he overtook him.

"Does this belong to you, sir?" he inquired, respectfully taking off his hat, and holding out the bundle.

"Ah—Connell Carrisforth—how do you do to-day? Yes, yes, that's my parcel; where did you find it, my boy?—you are very kind—very, indeed."

"I saw you drop it when you came over the stile, sir," replied Connell, handing it to the priest.

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“I am very much obliged to you, certainly. I should have been sorry to lose my new Bible!”

“Bible!” repeated Connell, for the word was electrical with him. “Oh, I am very glad I found it for you, sir.”

Something in the tone or manner of the youth, as he said these words, made Father Gasheen look more intently in his face. It struck him as presenting an unnatural expression.

“You are not well to-day, are you, my boy?” inquired the priest, kindly.

“Yes, sir, quite well, but——”

Connell hesitated—Father Gasheen became more observant of him.

“But what, Connell? Something goes wrong with you to-day; tell me what it is. You look ill, too—what troubles you, my son?”

Father Gasheen spoke very feelingly, and our poor youth was quite overcome. His long pent-up emotions struggled for vent. Tears flowed afresh, while he laid

his hand on his heart, and answered, "I am troubled here, sir!"

The priest was quite startled. It was a very unusual condition in which to find one of his parish. Never had he known such an instance before.

"What do you mean, Connell? I hardly understand—what have you been doing? You must come to confession. I am sure so good a boy as you can't have committed a very crying sin. Come, my son—our holy church will find ready means to comfort and lighten your heart."

And Father Gasheen led him, unresisting, into his own house, which they had by this time reached.

"Now, sit down, my child, and tell me all about it: what is it that makes you unhappy?"

But Connell did not reply. He did not really know how to open the subject.

"You are old enough for confirmation," commenced Father Gasheen, after waiting some minutes—"I think the performance

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of that duty will tend to your comfort. I suppose you wish to do like other Christians, don't you?"

"I wish to *be* a Christian first, and then act like one," replied Connell, modestly.

"Yes, very good, my dear, but you were baptized in infancy."

"I fear I am no Christian, if I were," persisted Connell—"I feel it, and know it, sir!"

"But don't you suppose we know best about that? The church declares——"

"But what does the Bible say about it, sir?" interrupted Connell, more courageously.

"The Bible, Connell, the *Bible*!" repeated Father Gasheen, opening his eyes very wide; "what do you know about the Bible?"

"I have read it through, sir, every word of it," replied he.

The priest's countenance instantly lost its bland expression. He looked astonished and displeased, but remained silent for

some minutes, regarding his young companion fixedly. At length he spoke in an altered and severer tone.

“What kind of a Bible have you been reading? and where did you obtain it?”

Connell knew he had gone so far, that no concealments would mend the matter, and he resolved to speak out frankly.

“I do not wish to tell how I came by it, sir, but it was a Protestant Bible!”

“Do your parents know of it, young man?” asked Father Gasheen, sternly.

“No, sir, I have never mentioned it to any one but yourself.”

“In that you have done right,” returned he;—“yes, you have done well to come to me, and I no longer wonder at your disquietude of mind. Those who stray blindly or presumptuously from the safe fold, will find thorns and briars, if not prowling wolves, ready to damage or destroy. My son, why have you done so? Who has been enticing your feet from the way of your duty? you, on whom I have placed such reliance—you, who have been so faith-



fully instructed by a pious mother!—I little thought this of you, Connell Carrisworth.”

“But I want more instruction, sir,” replied Connell, earnestly; “I want to know what is the truth and where to find it. And I feel bound to say, though I do it with all reverence and respect to you, Father, that if the Bible is right, some of the doctrines and practices of our church are wrong!”

This was a bold stand for a boy like Connell to take. He could see that it was, by its effect on the priest.

“This is sufficiently presumptuous,” said he, angrily; “and it is what I will not allow. You must give up this mode of thinking and talking, and return to your duty. You are in the very jaws of destruction, of apostasy, of heresy—and it is my duty as your spiritual father to rescue you from such a dangerous condition, cost what it may. You must give me up your Bible—you must tell me by what means it came into your possession, and what influences are at work, to turn you away from the true faith, contained only in the Holy Catholic Church?”

For a moment Connell was overawed by the tone of authority, with which Father Gasheen uttered these words, and his eye quailed beneath his indignant glance. He had been from his earliest years taught to revere him—nay, almost to regard him as belonging to some higher order of beings. It is so in all countries and communities where Romanism has the ascendancy.—The priests have almost unlimited control over the people, who are made to believe they are the direct successors of Christ and the Apostles, and are consequently clothed with great sanctity as well as power.

But our youthful inquirer after truth was not to be baffled thus, nor long disheartened. He looked full in Father Gasheen's lowering and clouded face, and replied :

“The Bible is not mine, sir;—I cannot give it to you, or any one else, but the owner, whom I decline to name. I have no wish, sir, to turn away from the true faith—I am only inquiring what the true faith is, and how I may find it—I feel myself a sinner, in danger of death eternal,

and I am come to inquire of you, Father, what I shall do to be saved?"

Connell looked solemn and earnest, as he said this, and Father Gasheen thought best to relax a little of his sternness. It was evident that the youth was in a critical state of feeling—it might be best to use persuasions, instead of commands or threatenings. A boy of spirit and keen susceptibilities, he knew him to be—it were not prudent perhaps to push him to exasperation at first.

"That I can very easily tell you, my child—I am glad to know you feel thus—our holy church receives the penitent with open arms. You are commanded to come to her embrace, by 'contrition, confession, and satisfaction:' and you shall receive the remission of your sins, however great they may have been."

"But I don't understand, sir, what you mean. What is contrition?"

"It is to be sorry for past sin, to hate it, and to be determined not to sin any more. It is being willing to compensate for venial

offences, by such penances as the priest shall prescribe; and in order to judge what the case requires, he must have knowledge of those offences—hence the necessity of confession. No sin, committed after baptism, can be pardoned any other way.”

“But who is to save me—what is to give me assurance that I am pardoned?” inquired Connell, anxiously.

“You forget your catechism, I fear;—does it not say—‘In the *minister* of God who sits in the tribunal of penances as his legitimate judge, the sincere penitent venerates the power and person of our Lord Jesus Christ—for the *priest* represents the character, and *discharges the functions of Jesus Christ.*’ And again it is declared in our canons, that, by virtue of his consecration, ‘the *priest* is made *interpreter* and *mediator* between God and man’—so you see the *priest* is able to do a great deal for the penitent sinner, if he continues faithful to his duty. The intercession of Christ, the blessed virgin, and the saints, is likewise to be counted upon, in connection with

the performance of such penance as shall tend to make satisfaction for his offences."

"But, sir," said Connell with a tremulous voice, "tell me first is the Bible true? Is the New Testament the rule of our faith? Are we to believe and rely upon it?"

"The Bible!" answered the priest, peevishly, "what have you to do or say about the Bible? I tell you the Bible is designed for the clergy, that they may instruct the people as to what it teaches, both in belief and practice. The Bible is full of deep mysteries, which the common mind cannot understand, and it is only by the help of learning, tradition, and the expositions of the Fathers, and the Church, that even they are able to come at its true meaning. Say no more about the Bible, Connell Carisforth, it is your greatest sin that you have clandestinely violated the injunctions of the Holy Church, in having in your hands what is so positively prohibited—and a Protestant Bible, too! You have sinned, and I do not wonder that you are distressed in mind. Such a course as you are pur-

suing will end in heresy and eternal perdition, and must not be allowed !”

“ But tell me, sir, I beg of you, whether the Bible is true ? for I find nothing in it of the mode of penitence and pardon of which you speak. It tells me that there is but one mediator between God and man, and that is Christ himself. It says nothing of penance or satisfaction—of the intercession of saints, or angels, or priests—nothing of the power of the Virgin. It says, ‘ God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth *in him* shall not perish but have everlasting life.’ It says, ‘ all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags ’—and that ‘ not by works of righteousness which we have done, but by his mercy he saves us ’ through faith in Jesus. It tells me ”——

“ Stop, I command you,” said Father Gasheen, in a harsh and imperative tone. “ No more of this, not a word. I see you are already tainted with the heresy of that corrupt book. If you refuse to give it up into my hands, and to come back to your

duty in the way I shall appoint, I shall feel it my duty to proceed against you as a heretic and schismatic! Do you hear, Connell?"

Connell did hear, and the blood rushed to his cheeks and forehead. He did fear the priest, for he had been brought up to do so, and could not at once divest himself of the feelings so carefully instilled into his childish heart. But they were relaxing their hold upon him. The truth of God, contained in his holy Word, had begun to unfasten the shackles of prejudice and superstition. It was beginning to make him free.

"Do you hear?" repeated the priest very angrily. "Will you, or will you not abide by my commands?"

The boy waited yet a few moments, as if irresolute what to say. Father Gasheen already felt that he had gained his point. There was a triumphant gleam in his gray eye, which seemed to say, 'I know how to bring him to terms very well.'

"Answer me," reiterated he, sternly.

“First tell me, sir, if the Bible is true!” replied Connell, modestly but firmly.

It was a very unexpected reply; and Father Gasheen saw still more plainly, that he had a case to deal with, which required all the skill and tact he was master of. His first impulse was to fly into a violent rage. But he finally decided within himself, that it might be best to meet the point, which seemed so vital with the lad, a little more candidly than at first he was disposed to do.

“True! yes—no”—he began, “not the one you have been reading;—the only translation of the Bible worthy to be relied upon, is the Vulgate, which is the one sanctioned by the church and the fathers. This contains the truth and no other.”

“I wish I could see a copy,” said Connell; “would you be so very kind, sir, as to show me a Vulgate Bible.”

Father Gasheen was sorely puzzled, but after hesitating a few minutes he went to his library and took down a large old book which he handed to Connell without a



word. He opened it eagerly, but soon found he could not make out a single word. It was all in Latin. Connell looked up disappointedly.

"Is this a Bible, sir? I cannot read it."

"Yes, that is the repository of the sacred mysteries of our holy religion. It is thus the church has decreed they shall be kept from the profane familiarity of the ignorant," answered Father Gasheen.

"But why should the truth be hidden from the people?—why shouldn't they read and understand for themselves?—it says, 'the truth shall make you free,' and commands us to search the Scriptures, for in them are the words of eternal life. I can't understand why it is, father."

"Nor is it necessary you should—that is the business of your religious teachers, not yours."

"But I wish I might read this Bible, sir, and see how it differs from the one I have been reading. Haven't you got a Vulgate in English, sir? Please lend it to me for a few days."

Father Gasheen was naturally kind-hearted, and Connell's amiable deportment and earnest importunities began to soften him considerably.

"You know, my son," said he, after ruminating awhile upon Connell's request, that it is contrary to the rules and policy of our holy church—but it may be the means in this case of raising up an able defender of her truths and doctrines. It is possible, Connell, that you may one day become a priest. How should you like to preach the gospel?"

"I want to know the truth—I want to find out what I shall do to be saved!" responded the youth with a tear in his eye—"I couldn't teach others what I was in doubt about myself."

"Well, my dear, you are so earnest, I will just lend you this for a few days," said the priest, taking up the package which Connell had picked up at the stile. "Don't keep it longer, and when you return it, bring me the other: now remember."

"I can't do that, sir: it's not mine. I

can't take this on any such condition," and Connell was about to lay down again the book he had just received from the priest.

"Well, well, we will see about that—you may examine this, and tell me what you think of it."

"Thank you, sir, thank you—it is very kind of you; I will be very careful and bring it back when you say; and now, good-bye, sir—I hope I haven't troubled you."

Father Gasheen took leave of him kindly at the door; he felt convinced that such a nature as his was to be won, rather than driven back to the fold.

## CHAPTER VI.

THE excitement of his interview with Father Gasheen, lent a glow to Connell's countenance, which was very satisfactory to his mother, when he returned to the cottage.

"There now, honey, I knew it was only a bit of play ye needed,—and play ye shall have, and nothing else this whole blessed week. Niver I'll have it said boy o'mine was worked to death."

Connell was too anxious to make the most of his vulgate Bible, to object very strenuously to his kind mother's plan. He commenced that very evening, and read as he had done before, till nearly daylight. Day after day he continued the perusal. Sabbath day he stayed from church to read; but with all his diligence he could

not finish it in the prescribed time. He read enough, however, and compared enough, to find out that some things were different from his Protestant Bible. Some meant the same, in somewhat varied language,—some were exactly alike. Some seemed to him to teach doctrines and duties which Father Gasheen did not lay much stress upon,—very important ones too, as far as he was able to understand;—but the style was strange, the phraseology obscure, and difficult, and the meaning often entirely beyond his comprehension. It was not so simple and intelligible as Mr. Bentley's Bible, and he could not help wondering that any body should give preference to it. On the whole, the more he read, the more perplexed and uncertain he became. His intense and long continued application, had exhausted his powers of thought, and by the time his book was to be returned, he was in a state of mental confusion and indecision truly deplorable.

“ Oh, if somebody would only teach me,”

said the poor boy, as he often closed the volumes in despair, and the tears fell fast upon his clasped hands. "What shall I do? I can see no light any where, and it grows even darker and darker."

Then some blessed and encouraging Scripture would occur to his memory,—“If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him.” “Come unto *me*, all ye that labor and are heavy laden.” “Seek first the kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof, and all other things shall be added unto you.” “Wilt thou not say, my Father, thou art the guide of my youth.”

Connell felt the beauty and appropriateness of these, and similar passages, and had stored them largely in his memory, for the time when he should have no Bible, (he knew he could not long retain Mr. Bentley's with safety,) but yet they afforded him no comfort; all was mist, and doubt, and uncertainty. He seemed to himself adrift

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upon some wild waters, with neither chart, compass, helm, nor anchor,—with land nowhere in sight, and a dark midnight lowering around. Oh, how miserable he felt! but he betook himself to the sure source of Eternal Light, to that fountain of spiritual life, from which no true seeker comes empty away. He learned in these trying days to *pray*, as he had never prayed before. The forms prescribed in the catechism, which he had been taught from babyhood to utter, did not express the need of his soul, although they contained many fitting and beautiful petitions. But nothing yet ministered peace to the longing and unrest of his spirit. There was a lack which nothing supplied,—a sense of danger and exposedness which continually agitated and alarmed him. The Spirit of God was doing its appropriate work in “convincing of sin,”—in setting forth the wages and just desert of sin, as well as its nature. Connell felt it a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, who is of purer eyes than

to behold iniquity;—in whose sight the very “heavens are not clean, and who charges his angels with folly.” He felt the need of something better than good works, with which to come before him,—of some stronger and surer mediation than that of saints, or even the blessed virgin. He saw the profane absurdity of that system which attaches merit to self-inflicted punishment or to ceremonial observance, and turned despairingly from these refuges of lies and superstition. But nothing was plain or clear,—his way was hedged up, and with no one could he take counsel.

Market day came again. Connell volunteered to attend to the business, and his proposal was very gladly accepted. He felt sure it was the part of prudence to restore the first borrowed Bible, lest it might fall into hands quite unscrupulous as to its disposal. Certain he was that all must be shortly divulged, and whatever happened to himself, he was unwilling the previous Book, which had wrought in him these new



feelings and desires, should come to harm. He knew that all would be against him, and that every effort would be made to bring him back to Romanism. Well he knew his mother's zeal; and his father generally fell in with what she thought right, or what Father Gasheen decided was so. He took it from its place of concealment in his little trunk, and placed it carefully in his wagon, not without some regretful tears; and as the steady farm horses jogged leisurely along, he improved his last opportunity to read over, and impress more thoroughly on his memory some of his favorite passages.

To Connell's great satisfaction, Mr. Bentley was once more at his old stand, and not particularly busy. The farm produce was speedily sold to him, as usual, for he liked to trade with Connell, and always took the opportunity to do so when he came to market. After the business matters were all adjusted, the Bible was brought in, and made over to its owner.

“ But why do you wish to return it, my young friend ? ” asked Mr. Bentley ; “ have you read it as candidly and as faithfully as you promised ? ”

“ Yes, sir, I have indeed,” replied Connell. “ I have read it through and through.”

“ And didn’t you wish to keep it any longer ? ”

This remark led to a full explanation. With childish simplicity, Connell told him of the effect which the Word had produced on his own mind,—of his difficulties, his doubts, his fears,—of his interviews with Father Gasheen. In fine he opened his whole heart to Mr. Bentley, for he felt that it would burst with its pent fullness, if not unburthened in some way.

We will not detail the conversation which succeeded, but it was one which our young inquirer never forgot.

Mr. Bentley was one of those Christians who can afford to give up a business hour, or even lose the opportunity for a good trade, if the Great Master’s work so require.

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He perceived the critical condition of the lad's mind, and like Priscilla and Aquila of old, in relation to Apollos, the Alexandrian, "took him, and expounded the way of God more perfectly." He explained his difficulties, and resolved his doubts. He showed him the simple and beautiful Gospel plan of salvation,—Jesus the Way, the Truth and the Life; who bore our sins in his own body on the tree,—who suffered the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God; who "was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities,—and by whose stripes we are healed." Gently he led him to the foot of the cross, and there urged him to lay down his burden of sin and ill-desert. Here, and here alone, were the Physician and the Balm which could remove the plague-spot of sin!"

Long, long, they talked, and by the aid of Mr. Bentley's clear and well-directed expositions, the glorious scheme of free grace and redemption loomed out of the darkness and confusion of conflicting opinions, and speculative investigation. He

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saw that one grand sacrifice has been once and forever made, and that this grace is to be received by faith alone. Disencumbered of the formalities and absurdities of Romanism, this precious truth came to his soul, and met its great necessity exactly. The response of his inmost heart was, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief."

A new joy sprang up within him ; and as he drove homeward, he knelt down in his empty market wagon, and solemnly gave himself to the service of his new-found Lord and Saviour, and importunately begged for wisdom to honor his name in every situation, and under every circumstance of trial and temptation.

Severe trials, and sore temptations he had reason to expect. A tide of opposition he knew he must buffet, in attempting to break away from the fellowship and influence of that corrupt system of religion in which he had been nurtured ; and he felt the need of strength and wisdom from above. Mr. Bentley had insisted on his acceptance of a little pocket Testament, in place of the

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returned Bible. One or two tracts which he thought adapted to his case, he had likewise given him, and Connell soon became so absorbed in their perusal, that he scarcely knew when the good steeds turned up to their master's door.

## CHAPTER VII.

THE father and brothers had not yet returned from work ; but his mother met him, when he entered the cottage, with a very singular expression of countenance. Her cheeks were flushed, and her eyes red and swollen, as if she had been weeping violently. She hardly appeared to notice him at all, and averted her face from his look of inquiry.

“What has happened, mother?” at length he ventured to ask, though he felt almost sure he could divine,—his secret had in some way been discovered ! But an explanation *must* come, he knew, sooner or later ; and this might be the best time for it. Perhaps she might be softened to regard his new feelings with toleration at least, if he could only present the subject wisely to her mind.

“What has happened, dear mother?” he repeated. “Are you sick, or grieved, or troubled?”

Bessie turned sharply round.

“It’s a wicked, desateful child ye are,” she broke out, while the tears started afresh. “I know all about it, I do, and ye can’t blind me eyes any longer.”

“Mother, what do you mean?”

“Don’t ask what I mean,” she retorted indignantly. “Ye know well enough what ye’ve been about, and so doos Father Gasheen; he’s been here, and told all—all—,” sobs prevented her going farther.

Connell had rightly guessed the course Father Gasheen would be likely to pursue in relation to himself; and he regretted that his mother’s first notion of the change wrought in him, should come from a source which would tend to excite her most violent prejudices at the outset. But counting upon the partiality and favoritism, with which Bessie had ever regarded him, as her first-born, he resolved to make a most earnest attempt to conciliate her.

"Now, dear mother, please sit down, and let me tell you just how it is,—and see if you think I have done so very wrong."

"I know too much already, I do," sighed she. "Ah me! that I should live to see my child, my Connell, a—a—," a fresh burst of tears choked her utterance.

"No, no," she continued, as soon as she could articulate, "ye mayn't talk to me,—I won't hear a word; but Father Gasheen left a charge for ye to go to him this day, and go to him ye shall, and submit to him too."

"Well, I ought to have returned his Bible before. I have kept it longer than he gave me leave already," replied Connell, somewhat evasively.

"Bible! didn't he say you had a heretic Bible in your hands! And didn't he search the premises all over and over, to find it? Where have ye hid it, ye wicked boy? It's going to bring ye to perdition. What have ye done with it?"

"It is very safe, mother," returned Connell, feeling a trifle of resentment, rising in



his heart, at the invasion of his privacy by the inquisitive priest. "Father Gasheen can have his own Bible, but no other."

At this moment, his sisters Maud and Mary came in to prepare the dinner, and the conversation was interrupted; but from the few words they dropped, and the altered demeanor they exhibited towards him, it was very evident he would find in them little sympathy. Doubtless Father Gasheen had been careful to prescribe to the whole family, the line of conduct to be pursued towards him, till he should gladly return to the fold in which he had been reared.

His father and brothers were sociable upon the farm business, and the state of the market, but made no allusion to the disclosures of the morning. Still, Connell thought he discerned more stiffness and infamiliarity than usual, even in them; he was hardly prepared for so sudden an exhibition of hostility; it sank to his heart like a millstone, and he could hardly keep back his tears. "This is but the beginning," thought he, "but let not your heart

be troubled." "In this world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

After dinner, Bessie insisted that Father Gasheen's injunction should be obeyed. Connell must go to his house, and be dealt with as he should think proper. Little fear had Bessie, that a son of her's would dare resist the authority, or contemn the instructions of a priest of Rome, for whose office and power her own veneration knew no bounds; and she felt quite reassured, when he had departed on his errand. But one result she fancied *could* follow, and anon her boy would be safe again in the good old way.

The interview, however, between the two, was not quite so satisfactory as she expected. It tended not at all to heal the alarming, and still widening breach.

Connell stopped a moment on the threshold, to breathe a short inward petition for strength and wisdom, to act, and speak aright; and then knocked, and was admitted to the presence of Father Gasheen.

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That portly gentleman sat at his study table, reading a newspaper. He looked up and gave him a nod of cool recognition, and then proceeded with his reading. Connell remained standing by the door, hat in hand, till he had finished his paragraph. When this was done, and the priest had pushed the paper from him, as if ready to attend to business, Connell stepped up, and laid his Bible on the table.

“I am very much obliged sir, for the loan of it. I intended to have brought it back before,” said Connell with some trepidation, for Father Gasheen’s manner was so changed, as to embarrass a youth like him, very much.

There was a dead silence for some minutes. But the priest at length putting on a severe and awful look, said,

“And where is the other? Did I not enjoin it upon you to bring it to me? Wherefore have you dared to secrete it, in defiance of my command?”

“I told you, sir,” said Connell, “it was not mine, and I had no right to give it into

any other hands than the owner's, which I have already done."

"Who is the owner?" inquired Father Gasheen tartly.

"That I am not willing to tell, as it is of no consequence to any one."

"But you *must* tell me all about it; and promise never to meddle with the pernicious thing again, as long as you live. Your parents will coöperate with me in bringing you to terms, young man, and this is but the preliminary requisition. Will you do it?"

Connell's frank boyish face suddenly became clouded, and he looked down reflectively upon the floor.

"Will you do it?" reiterated the priest, in a louder and more intimidating tone; for he thought he saw the lad's courage giving way.

"I can't do either, sir, possibly," returned he firmly, but modestly.

Father Gasheen's indignation was roused by this calm and decided reply. He broke out into violent reproaches and threats.

“Can’t you indeed, sir? And pray what may the reason be? I will listen to no such impertinence from a young scape-grace like yourself, sir; you have *got to* do my bidding, or abide consequences, which you are not prepared for. You have got to renounce these nonsensical and dangerous notions, and the company and counsel of those who are leading you astray. It’s my duty to pluck you as a brand from the burning, and I’ll do it, by virtue of my authority as your ghostly father, be sure I will.”

Connell’s cheeks glowed, but he mastered his feelings; and after a few minutes silence replied meekly, “Father, I came to be instructed, not to dispute with your reverence. I have not intended you any disrespect, and I beg you will excuse what might seem improper in a boy like me,—but I want to ask a very few questions, which, if you will have the goodness to answer them, will give me a great deal of satisfaction.”

“It is not your province to ask questions,

but to answer them, sir," returned Father Gasheen, severely; "the people are to receive the truth, less or more, from the teachings of the holy minister of the church. They are not to perplex their minds with dark and difficult points, or with curious investigations,—these are reserved for the clergy, who are learned and skillful in such things. To hear, to believe, and to obey, is the sole duty of the layman."

"But please tell me, sir," put in Connell, without paying much heed to the prescribed rule for "the people," "whether this Bible of yours is the one which has been used in the Catholic church for a long time?"

"The Vulgate? Yes, it is the only translation we allow to be genuine. It is very ancient,—far older than any other in general use," replied the priest.

"Then it is the same which Luther found in the library of the monastery at Erfurt?"

"Yes, and what then?" inquired Father Gasheen.

"He was a priest too, wasn't he, sir?"

and had never seen a Bible, till he was twenty-four years old?"

"Well—."

"And he read and read it day and night, till he almost knew it by heart, and— and—." Connell hesitated, uncertain whether to go on or not.

"Well—."

"It led him to see that it didn't at all agree with the doctrines and practices of the Roman Catholic church to which he belonged, so that he felt that one or the other must be given up; please sir," said Connell with a deprecating glance at Father Gasheen's flushed and angry face, "that's just the way I have felt since I read the Bible,—yours as well as the other, for they are alike in general."

"This is just what I expected," said the priest, bringing his fist down violently upon the table. "But I've done with talking,—I'll—."

"Please, sir, allow me to ask one thing more," interrupted the youth, with a courage which quite perplexed the irritable

Father. "What is meant where Paul speaks of a time when there shall be falling away from the true faith? He says 'the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils,—speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared as with a hot iron,—forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving?' Who are meant by these, Father Gasheen?"

If Father Gasheen had been quite certain that his reputation merely as a scholar would not be compromised by a refusal to answer this last inquiry, he would have expressed the indignation he felt at being thus perseveringly beset; and perhaps given his youthful parishioner an unceremonious dismissal from his premises; but there were private reasons which suggested, that it might be wiser on the whole to bear the impertinence, and reply calmly. It might be told that he evaded or declined to meet

honest inquiries, which would hardly be to the credit of one whose business it was to instruct in all things pertaining to religion. So he answered in a very short and decided way, that this production of St. Paul referred to the Gnostics, a sect of heretics, who flourished in the first century of the Christian era, and whose doctrines and usages agreed with it very closely."

Connell mused a moment, and then said, "But, Father, it says in the '*latter times*.' St. Paul would hardly call the times in which he wrote, the latter times, would he, sir? And he wrote in the first century, I think. Isn't it possible, sir, that he meant some other apostates besides the Gnostics?"

"How very wise my young friend is getting," returned Father Gasheen, with a sneer. "A model of modesty, certainly, when he questions the expositions of the Fathers of the Church, on a very plain passage of Scripture. This is a blessed effect of reading the Bible certainly; it makes people humble we see. Your pernicious Protestant counselors would probably

explain to you that it meant the Roman Catholic Church, and no doubt you would be silly enough to believe it, or any other absurdity; but remember boy," and the priest rose and put on his sternest look, "remember it is at the peril of your soul, you listen to such persuasions,—they are snares which lure you down to hell!"

Connell did not immediately reply. He could not deny that Mr. Bentley had put this very interpretation upon the passage in question. It was one of many he had pointed out as descriptive of that corrupt and fallen church as it has existed for centuries; nor could the youth fail to perceive how just and accurate and striking they were. He would have been glad to ask a few more questions, but Father Gasheen now manifested so decided an impatience for the interview to close, that he rose to retire.

"Come to me again before Sunday, and be ready on your knees to confess your error, and disclose those who are leading you astray, with any thing else that may

be required of you, and all this shall be passed by," said the priest solemnly; "otherwise I shall deal rigorously with you, young man!"

Connell was about to leave the room, but he stopped, and after a moment's hesitation spoke thus:

"Father Gasheen, I thank you for your counsels, instructions, and warnings. But I have resolved, come what may, to take my stand upon the Bible, whether it makes a Protestant or a Catholic of me. If it is the Word of God, if it is the revealed will of God, as you say, then it is safe to rely upon its teachings, and they are far plainer and simpler than the teachings of men. I have found in it just such a Saviour as my poor, troubled, sinful soul needs. I hope I have received him by faith. I think I love him, and mean to serve him all the days of my life; and now if tribulation, or even persecution shall follow this resolution of mine, I shall meet it as bravely as I can for Christ's sake. I don't know what punishment you have a right to inflict upon me,

as I have never been regularly admitted a member of the Catholic communion; but you can, doubtless, persuade my parents, and friends, and neighbors, to treat me ill,—you can do as you think fit,—I have that good promise to encourage me, ‘When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.’ ”

Connell was astonished at his own courage, as he finished speaking. Father Gashen took no notice of his remarks, only to bid him remember what he had just said, as he had no more to say; and then they parted.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE next Sunday Father Gasheen preached a very remarkable sermon. It was a medley of ill-humor, reproach, sarcasm, and complaint, with nothing at all of that blessed gospel message which has been committed to the ambassadors of Christ. It represented the wickedness and disgrace of apostatizing from the holy Catholic church. It was one of those deadly and unpardonable sins, which "have never forgiveness, neither in this world, nor that which is to come." He stormed at the increasing laxity of family discipline which did not restrain children from the company and influence of those who would subvert their religious principles, however carefully instilled, and ended with a passionate exhortation to all good Catholics, not to allow a flagrant instance of the kind at present existing among them to pass by without

suitable reprobation. The Lord would be pleased, he said, with any reasonable means to turn a stubborn offender from the error of his ways; they would "save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins."

The Irish nature is proverbially excitable; and little time was needed to show the effect of this ill-judged harangue, in the lowering countenances turned on the Carrysforth family from all quarters of the parish church; for every body knew who was meant; the change in young Connell had before been whispered through the community, with much dissatisfaction. Poor Bessie heard Father Gasheen's bitter words with unaffected grief and terror; thus first becoming aware of the result of the interview from which she had hoped so much. But as it never entered her heart, that her spiritual guide could take a wrong course, or cherish a mistaken view upon any subject, she felt bound to accept his opinion and embrace his idea, in regard to the reclaiming of her misguided boy, as she honestly believed him. The tears poured

down her cheeks, and she thought herself the most wretched of mothers. Michael listened with the utmost surprise and chagrin. He had in truth given very little attention to the matter, even when Bessie had presented it to him at home in the most moving manner she was able. "The boy would come round right," he said—"never fear; young folks always had their notions; besides, he knew so good a boy as Connell had always been, and was still, could not be far out of the way; he would venture him."

But to be singled out of a whole congregation and thus made a spectacle of, while the ill-will of neighbors and friends was invoked against himself and family, was a little more than he was prepared for. It was a serious business, he began to think, and must be looked after. Doubtless, when Father Gasheen broached the matter some days before, he had manifested too much indifference about it, and this was the mode his reverence had chosen to bring him to a proper appreciation of it; a mean and das-

tardly mode, he could not but consider it, but then nobody must contend with the priest, or question his right to use **such** measures as he thought fit for the edification of the flock, or to regather such as might be going astray.

The whole family came home from church in a state of violent excitement. Connell had that day, for the first time, slipped away early, to attend the nearest Protestant service, two or three miles away, at a little Methodist chapel. When he was returning he met various persons of Father Gasheen's congregation, some of whom spoke words of insult and abuse to him, and even offered some violence, with threats of more if he did not quit the way he was pursuing. By these things he learned the tenor of Father Gasheen's proceedings, but he was quite unprepared for the storm which broke about his ears, the moment he crossed the cottage threshold.

"Where have you been, sir?" demanded his father, his face flushed, and his whole manner tremulous with anger.

Connell hesitated a moment—the whole aspect of things in the family bore evidence that something unusual had occurred.

“Where have you been?” repeated Michael, in a voice hoarse with passion.

Connell frankly informed him. But the information tended nothing to allay his rage. He seized him by the collar, and shook him rudely.

“And who gave ye leave to be straying off, and keeping company with heretics? Did your father or your mother? And what did we have to suffer on your account? Havn’t we been held up to reproach and insult? Havn’t we been threatened and abused, and our neighbors and friends set against us, and all on your account? Do ye want to be the ruin of us all? Do ye want the house burnt down over our heads? Do ye want us to be mocked and hooted at wherever we’re seen? I tell ye, boy, ye’ve got to take a different course! I tell ye the time’s come that these things must be given up, or there’s not room under my roof for ye!”

"Father," began Connell, mildly.

"Not a word—I won't have it—I'll have no argument—I've made up my mind, and I'll give ye time to make up your's; I won't be rash with ye, for ye've been a good son to me, and I hope ye'll continue to be. But I can't have things going on so. You may have one month to decide whether ye'll go and submit yourself to Father Gasheen and do as he bids ye—or quit my house forever! Take your choice; I give you a month from this day!"

"I wouldn't give him half so long, that I wouldn't," put in Bessie, who stood by in a glow of excitement. "Ah me! what are we coming to?"

"Nor I"—"nor I"—added Maud and Mary, looking very much dissatisfied.

"We shall be mobbed before that time," suggested Dermot, the next younger boy.

"Stop, every one!" said Michael, sternly. "It shall be just as I say. He shall have a month to consider his ways; and I make no doubt, he'll see in that time that he's wrong—but he shall never say his own

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father dealt rashly or hastily with him. A good boy he's been, as ye all know, and he shall have fair play. Now hold your tongues every one, on this subject, till the time is out, and then we'll attend to it. Let him wholly alone!"

It was not often that Michael Carrisforth made any decided demonstration of his prerogative, as master of his family—he was easy and good-natured; and left a great deal to Bessie's management. But when he did lay down rules, it was in such a way as to secure prompt obedience. Every lip was still, and poor Connell was suffered to retire to his little attic, where his heart gave vent to its violent emotions in a gush of tears.

The month that succeeded, was a long and weary one enough. The averted looks, and cold, chilling manner of the household, where such fondness and tenderness had hitherto existed, was very trying to an affectionate nature, like that of our young hero. The constrained and formal conversation, which had hitherto flowed so freely

and joyously, and in which he had been wont to take so large a part, afforded nothing but pain and disturbance to his mind. He seemed to be shut out from the family sympathies entirely. Work went on as usual, and Connell tried to surpass even himself in faithfulness and industry. He rose early and worked late, and was studious to do every thing in the best possible manner to meet his father's approbation. But all would not do. He felt himself under the ban of the family, as well as that of the priest, whom he knew to be the prime mover in these proceedings. Once or twice he cautiously approached the proscribed subject, when none but his father was by. He thought it possible that his sympathies might be enlisted in his behalf; but Michael only stamped his foot, and reminded him of his command.

Let it not be thought, however, that this long, dreary month had no consolations for our young pilgrim, just set out in the narrow path to the celestial city.

It was a month of many doubts, dis-

couragements and fears. It was also a month of earnest and fervent prayer, and self-questioning; of strong resolutions, of faith and of joy. Yes, so clear and bright were his heavenly hopes, so firmly did he cling to that almighty Saviour which his borrowed Bible had revealed, that he could sometimes quite forget his worldly troubles, or cast them wholly on him who has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. No one in the family could conceive the inward quiet and joy he sometimes felt, while that little room echoed to those beautiful lines,

“Jesus, lover of my soul,  
Let me to thy bosom fly,  
While the waters round me roll,  
While the tempest still is nigh.”

Nor was there one in the family, who did not confidently expect that this unhappy probation month would rectify every thing, and restore him to his right mind and the true faith again. He could not resist longer. The struggle was so great, he grew paler

and thinner every day, and it would eventually result as they wished—his mother was sure of it. The neighbors, too, were quieted with the same confidence, though they sometimes grew a little noisy and troublesome, in their zeal to work out Father Gasheen's suggestion. But there was no outbreak, and the dreary month was drawing to its close.

The last Sunday came. Connell was seen with his family in the parish church, apparently very humble and devout. There could be no reasonable doubt that he had yielded. His mother looked happy, and his father satisfied. Father Gasheen plumed himself on the success of his plan; and the Sabbath passed quietly away.

## CHAPTER IX.

LONG before the dawn on Monday morning, Connell was up and dressed, and on his knees by his bedside. Oh, how earnestly he prayed—how tenderly he remembered each one of the dear household, before that throne of grace which is always accessible to the pious heart! How importunately he begged for the quickening “grace which bringeth salvation,” for each individual—and then he prayed for himself, that he might be guided by that wisdom which cannot err—that he might honor his Saviour’s name, through evil report, as well as good report—that his way might be made plain, and that he might have courage for any trial that was appointed for him, and especially, for that of leaving his father’s house and going he knew not whither, for Christ’s sake.

He rose from his knees, and wiped away

the fast-flowing tears. 'Then he made up a little bundle from his comfortable wardrobe, and sat down to await the moving of the family, and to deliberate on the course he had better pursue. Poor boy ! he found it a hard matter to decide, for difficulties and obstacles seemed to hedge up every path.

In Ireland it is no safe or easy matter for a youth thus to forsake the shelter of the "cot where he was born," and the protection of his father's arm. He is stigmatized as a runaway, or looked upon as a young vagabond, upon whose word no reliance is to be placed ; he may wander days, weeks, and months, without finding employment enough to supply him with necessary food. If it be known or suspected that he is a Protestant, no Catholic family will, on any pretext, give him work or shew him favor. He is subjected to annoyances and trials that an American youth, under such circumstances, would know nothing about. Poor Connell knew these things too well, and often his heart sank within him, at the



thought of what he must probably encounter.

When the breakfast horn sounded, Connell descended, budget in hand, and apparently all ready for a start, greatly to the astonishment of every member of the household. They had counted upon a result the reverse of this, with the utmost confidence, and when Connell seated himself in his accustomed place, with a pleasant morning salutation, the feelings of each may be better imagined than described. Bessie's speaking face instantly betrayed the agitation of her disappointed heart. Michael gave one almost incredulous glance from the boy to the bundle, and then with the gravest of faces tried to eat his breakfast. But that morning meal in the Carrisforth cottage was a mere pantomime—and one after another left their seats to escape the painful constraint of the occasion. At length Michael drew back his chair, and after a violent effort to clear his voice, began.

“Well, Connell, my boy, you remember what I said to ye a month ago?”

"Yes, father."

"I suppose you've made up your mind then what course to take."

"Yes, sir."

"And you're coming back into the good old way, without making us any farther trouble or anxiety, I expect. How is it?"

"Father," said Connell, feelingly, "I don't want to make you trouble or anxiety—but father, I never can be a Catholic, never! I have read the Bible, and I find nothing of it there—and I am resolved by God's help to leave every thing for the Bible! I have done Father Gasheen no harm, and given him no offence, and I cannot consent to put myself under his control—so, dear father, if you cannot consent to let me stay at home, and give me liberty to believe as I must believe, and act consistently with that belief, I am going to leave you as you said, forever!"

"Oh dear! oh dear!" screamed Bessie from the next room, where she had heard every word. "Your soul will be lost, my child—you shall not go to perdition, if I

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can help it. Send for the priest, Michael Carrisforth."

"No, mother, I have found a Saviour—my soul is safe. Oh, if you would all seek and find him, my most earnest prayer would be answered. But I don't wish to see Father Gasheen—let me go in peace—I shall always love and pray for you. I have had a happy home, but the good Lord will take care of me, because I leave it for his truth's sake. Now, dear mother, good-bye, and father—good-bye Maud and Mary—good-bye Dermot, and little Jamie—don't forget me, pray don't, any of you!"

Connell took up his bundle, and went towards the door. His father stood irresolute and distressed, not knowing how to act. He took a couple of guineas from his pocket, and put them into Connell's hand.

"You don't know what you are doing, child," he said with a tremulous voice. "You don't know what kind of a world it is, you are going to buffet."

"No, father, but I don't go alone—when my father and my mother forsake

me, then the Lord will take me up.' 'Lo, I am with you always even to the end of the world.' These words give me trust and courage. Good-bye, dear father, once more !''

Connell had gone but a few paces from the house, when a great outcry alarmed him, and he heard his sisters scream, "She's going to die, mother's going to die !" He could not resist the impulse to rush back to the cottage.

There, to be sure, was Bessie in a deadly swoon upon the floor, and all hands frightened nearly out of their senses. As he was rushing for some water to dash in her face, Maud rudely caught the pitcher from his hand—"Let her alone," said she, "and get away; it's you that's killed her, and you will have it to answer for; you will be the death of us all yet, for you're a wicked wretch !"

"That you are," assented Mary—"just see what mischief you have done. Oh, poor mother !"

These cruel reproaches went to Connell's

heart, like a poisoned arrow. He put both hands to his face, and wept aloud; and then seeing his mother give signs of returning animation, he once more quitted the cottage.

He had no definite purpose before him, but he had long thought that if he could see Mr. Bentley, he would give him such advice in this emergency, as would be valuable. It had been his hope to go to market, and see him during the month just passed, but it had not been convenient. He now resolved to direct his steps towards the market town, and if possible gain an interview with that gentleman. Accordingly he walked as briskly forward as the sad state of his feelings would allow, for the image of his pale, unconscious mother, as well as the cruel manner and words of his sisters, dwelt painfully in his mind. Again and again he revolved the questions, "Am I doing right? Is it the path of duty I am treading? Can such a sacrifice really be required of me in this age of the world?" Conscience said yes, to every query, and,

looking upward for wisdom and guidance, he walked rapidly on. It was yet early, and he hoped to get beyond the observation of the disaffected in his immediate neighborhood, before many were stirring. Father Gasheen had so wrought on the excitable feelings of some of the lowest order of his parishioners, that they were already to offer him molestation, or even violence, if thereby they might gain the approbation of the priest, and have their ill-directed zeal placed to the account of doing God service, in deterring others from following one bad example. This they were sure Father Gasheen would do, for he was really so ignorant and bigoted a man, that he did not know what better course to take. He had labored to convince and persuade the young offender—he had threatened and coaxed—now what more could he do, but set in operation means to *punish* him? And the whole history of the Romish church shews, that her clergy have been, and still are, (with some honorable exceptions,) not over-scrupulous as to the means

to be used in dealing with what they denominate heresy. The same spirit is in Romanism which sent martyrs to the stake and prisoners to the torture, in old persecuting days. Circumstances alone restrain the exercise of that power, which stained its strong hands in the heart's blood of thousands on thousands of the innocent and helpless. Its disposition and tendency are the same.

Connell had been about an hour on the way, and was still making diligent progress towards the market town, when he heard behind him the loud and rapid rumbling of wheels over the frozen ground, (for it was now late in autumn). He did not look back, however, nor think much about it, till a familiar voice called out, "Connell, Connell, stop!" Then he turned about, and saw his father urging the staid old farm horses to a most unwonted activity.

"Stop, stop, boy, why don't ye? I've been hallooing this last mile—didn't ye hear me?" said Michael, as he pulled up by Connell's side.

"No, father; but what brings you in such haste, I wonder. Is mother worse?"

"Mother's well enough, but I tell ye what it is, boy, *I can't stand this*—it takes the spirit all out o' me;" said his father, drawing his great rough hand across his eyes; "besides, I learned just a few minutes after you'd gone, that Pat O'Shea and Myrtie Brady, and a few of those low fellows, were raising a gang like themselves to pursue and trouble you; and as there's no telling what lengths they'd go, set on by priest Gasheen, I thought I'd get the start of them. I tell you, child, that snarling harangue we had in church a month ago hurt my opinion of his reverence mightily, and he had better mind how he tries to turn my neighbors against me or my family! But come, jump in, I'm going to carry you home, the other way, so we shall be sure and not meet those rowdies."

"But, father," hesitated Connell, "I can't be a Catholic, indeed I cannot, and those people may trouble you greatly, if I am there. I should be sorry to make diffi-

culty for you, and then mother and the girls would be made miserable, perhaps."

"You need say no more. I'll take care of myself and mother and the girls—if these fellows molest us we'll have the law down upon 'em—so in with you, and don't lose more time talking."

"Oh father, how kind you are to me," said the youth, as he climbed to the seat he had so often occupied beside his father.

"Well, you've been a good child, and it's not myself that will see you wronged by any body, whether you call yourself Catholic or not, and I don't know as it makes much difference after all," responded Michael, as he turned his horses down into a bye-road, which was "the other way" home.

Connell was very much surprised by the liberal sentiment last dropped, but said nothing in reply; Father Gasheen was to be thanked for it, he felt sure.

They reached the cottage without any incident, but found a number of men and women in and about the house. They

were not, however, of that class from which they had any reason to apprehend ill-treatment, but some of them most decent and respectable neighbors, come to make inquiries and express sympathy with Bessie. Very much they wished to know what fault Connell found with the Catholic faith and worship. What points he objected to, and whether Father Gasheen could not set things right with him. Bessie had replied to all their queries, as well as she could, but she was not sufficiently informed to make any thing very clear to her auditors.

When Michael understood their wishes, he thought a moment, and then turned to Connell:

"My boy," said he, "I want you should explain to these good people all they wish to know about your change of feeling on this subject. If you can't be a Catholic, as you say, I want you should tell 'em why, and give a reason for your course."

"I will, sir," replied Connell, promptly.

"Now, friends," said Michael, turning

to the people, "the boy says he'll explain to ye why he can't be like the rest of us; and it's fair, ye see, to give him a chance without vexing and troubling him. If he can't show sufficient reason for his new way of thinking, let him take the more shame for it; but if he can, let's hear it."

"To be sure that's fair," said they all.

"Well, then, perhaps ye'll gather here next Sunday morning, and we will give him a candid hearing."

The proposition was accepted, and the people dispersed.

CHAPTER X.

THE next Sabbath morning, instead of a dozen friends and neighbors, more than a hundred people had assembled on the green before the pretty cottage of the Carris-forths; men, women, and children, from all the neighboring hamlets. It seemed as if the entire population of the country for several miles around had turned out—and some among them were known to be of a mischievous and desperate character. The wily O'Shea and the ruffian Brady were there, of whom we have before spoken, as tools of Father Gasheen—with many others of their stamp. But the majority were of the more quiet and orderly sort, from whom nothing was to be apprehended, unless their passions were violently excited.

It was with some concern, that even Michael regarded the constantly increasing

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numbers about his doors. His wife and girls were almost panic-stricken. Nothing but his authority prevented their escaping to some other dwelling, where they might count upon safety from a mob. But Michael was a man of nerve and resolution, when once his Irish blood was stirred, and he told Bessie with a sternness she did not think it prudent to oppose, that if he could not protect his own family, the law could and should, and that, too, upon his own premises.

Connell's young heart, too, fluttered with trepidation, as he thought of the part he was expected to act in this drama; but a few inspiring words from his father stimulated his resolution to do his very best, and leave the event with God. He remembered the injunction to the disciples, "Take no thought what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that same hour;" and he hoped the Lord would direct him.

A rude platform was constructed, by laying boards upon barrels, and Connell took his place upon it.

“Now be a man, and don't let the fear of any body hinder you from telling a plain story,” said Michael encouragingly; “I'll stand by you till the last, and don't you be afraid to speak your mind;—see here, I'll keep 'em quiet,” and he pulled open his frock bosom, and disclosed a pair of pistols!

“Oh father, father,”—said Connell deprecatingly.

“Let me alone, I know what I'm about; I'll make the first speech, and then do you go ahead!”

“Friends,” proceeded Michael, addressing the people, “you've come here at my invitation, to learn why this boy of mine can't be a Catholic, like the rest of us. I've promised you should know his reasons, for he's a boy, you all know, that don't take up a new belief, or adopt a new theory without reasons. I want to know myself, and I want you should all know, what he can't away with in our holy Catholic faith. I'm glad to see you all, but if any have come for riot and disturbance, they have no business here, and

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had better leave as soon as they find it convenient. I'm resolved to have quiet and order; and the first man of ye that sets any noise or tumult afoot, will wish he hadn't; for I'll still him in a way he don't expect. Ye all know Mike Carrisforth, when his blood is warm, and he'll do as he says." Then turning to Connell, "Now's your time, my boy," said he, and sat down where his eye could command the entire assembly.

Connell's face was suffused with a crimson blush, as he commenced modestly:

"My good neighbors, I never before attempted a speech, and I fear I shall make but clumsy work of it; but if you will have patience, I will endeavor to show you the change which has taken place in my feelings. I am neither afraid, nor ashamed, to acknowledge that I cannot be a Roman Catholic, and perhaps before I have done some of you will agree with me."

There might have been heard the rustle of a leaf, so still the people stood or sat

about the youthful speaker. Perhaps the determined visage, the kindling eye and resolute air of Michael, taken in connection with the remarks he had just offered, might have had something to do with it, but so it was—and every eye was intently fixed, as the boy proceeded.

“You see friends,” said Connell, coming directly to the point, “*I borrowed a Bible!* and when I came to read it, I found a great many wonderful things that I had never heard of before—things the priests never take the trouble to tell us, but which are calculated to make every body wiser and better—things which every body ought to know, and believe, and practice—things which our blessed Saviour, Jesus Christ taught, and his holy apostles; as well as things which prophets inspired by God, and other great and good people, wrote, who lived in still more ancient days. But a great many things which we all have been taught to believe, and which we suppose the Bible teaches, *are not there!*”


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They tell us that what the Fathers, and the Councils, and the Pope, and tradition teach is as good as the Bible, and as binding on the conscience. Do you believe it, friends? The Bible is *God's* voice—these are the opinions of *men*—should they be received as of equal authority?

“I had always wondered why we were prohibited from reading the Bible, (if it be really the Word of God and given to teach us the way to be *saved from* eternal perdition) any more than Protestant people—but when I read it, I was no longer surprised—I saw clearly enough, that, if the people were to read and believe for themselves, they would no longer continue to be Romanists—the church knows that well enough, and this is the reason why we are kept down in darkness and ignorance! They don't want to let us know what is in the Bible, for then we shall see we have been blinded and deluded. And did you ever think, neighbors, why it is that all our religious services are conducted in a lan-

guage that we cannot understand a word of? Why shouldn't we know the meaning and use of services we engage in? What chance is here for deceiving us? They tell us we must believe what the church believes, whether we know or not. The holy Apostle Paul speaks very differently—he says, 'without *faith* it is impossible to please God,' and that a knowledge of the truth is necessary before we can believe it! How are we to obtain that knowledge, if they deny us the Bible?

"Again we are told that we may merit our own salvation by observing all the directions of the church—doing works of righteousness, penance, &c. The Bible says we are saved 'by grace through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God.' 'Not of righteousness lest any man should boast'—but 'of his mercy he saved us through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost! God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever *believeth in him*

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should not perish but have everlasting life!’ ‘There is none that doeth good, no not one.’ ‘All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. The wicked shall be turned into hell with all that forget God,’ &c.

“When I read these things, neighbors, I was alarmed and distressed, as you may suppose. I knew not what to do—I felt that I was a sinner before God, and had no righteousness to plead, even if that could be acceptable. What could I do? I thought of the Virgin, the Saints, and the Angels, but there is nothing in all the Bible which even permits us to pray to them, or seek their aid; they can do nothing for us, not even the Virgin herself. Jesus is the only ‘mediator between God and man,’ says the Bible—the ‘only name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved.’ He says of himself, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life—no man cometh unto the Father but by me!’

“I did not at first understand, as I think I

now do, how to *come to the Father*; or how the Saviour was to save me. I went to Father Gasheen, and told him my trouble and distress; he reprov'd me for reading the Bible, and forbade me to do it any more; and went on to tell me to practice those things which would merit salvation—there was no danger, only do what the church enjoins—(*but which the Bible does not!*) I begged him to tell me in the first place, if the Bible was really the Word of God, and binding upon men. He said the Catholic Bible was; then I entreated that he would show me one, which he did, after many objections; but what was my surprise to find them alike, in those very points which most perplexed and distressed me! I asked him to explain, but he grew angry, and only threatened me. I left him more miserable and disturbed than ever, and more doubtful what I should do to be saved—but in his own time the Lord sent me good counsel, and I humbly hope I have learned how to believe in the Lord

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Jesus Christ, to the salvation of my soul. I cast myself on his mercy alone—and he has said, ‘Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.’ This is what the Bible has led me to feel and to do, my friends—it is its proper and legitimate effect—‘the entrance of thy word giveth *light*,’ says the Scripture, and it is this very thing our priests are afraid of—and this is why they will not permit us to read and judge for ourselves—they know we cannot remain what we now are, and have the Bible in our hands. Here is a point I can never concede—I cannot give up the Word of God, and so I cannot be a Catholic. I shall thank him till I die, and thank him in eternity, for that *borrowed Bible!*”

Connell sat down, without looking to observe the effect of his speech upon his rough auditors. Had he done so, he might have been surprised at the number of moistened eyes turned upon himself. His father noticed it, however, and came to the con-

clusion, that there would be no need of claiming the aid or protection of the deadly weapons concealed in his bosom. Even the rogue and ruffian, before mentioned, found nothing to encourage a desperate undertaking in each other's faces, or in the faces or manner of their comrades. One by one they slunk out of sight, while the more sober and respectable of the assembly gathered together in knots, to make their comments on what they had just heard, and question with one another, whether these things were really so. Connell was ever a favorite with the neighbors, and even now there were few who were clamorous in finding fault with him, while Father Gasheen, and some other of the neighboring priests, were severely censured for neglect of their appropriate duties—of which various instances were adduced, within the knowledge of the several speakers. Michael came down from the platform, and mingled his opinions with theirs.

“What else could the boy do?” said one.

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“I don’t see that he’s very much out of the way,” said another.

“If the priests won’t teach us, who shall?” questioned a third.

“We ought to have the Bible,” suggested a fourth, “and I don’t believe it’s right that we don’t.”

“I should like to hear more about it,” remarked a fifth.

“I should like to have Father Gasheen hear what we’ve heard, and answer for himself,” muttered a sixth.

“Why can’t your boy give us another talk?” asked one of them of the complacent Michael.

“What say you, to it, my lad?” said another to Connell himself.

When Connell understood the request, he very cheerfully answered.

“I will read the Bible to you, if you like, and then you can judge for yourselves, if it be fit for every body. Oh, friends, I wish you could all read it for yourselves!”

The next Sunday morning was fixed upon for another meeting, and the people

quietly dispersed, with thoughts of unusual seriousness lodged in many bosoms.

Connell fell on his knees in his little attic room, to thank God for the peaceable and friendly issue to which he had guided this dreaded occasion, and to supplicate for wisdom, to aid him in his humble efforts to bring some of these simple people to the knowledge of his power and blessed Word.

All through the week the youth had reason to rejoice in the kindness and affection of the whole household. He had more than satisfied his father—even Bessie's motherly pride was a trifle moved that he had pleased every body, so contrary to her expectations; and on a subject too, so likely to inflame a Catholic community, led on by an unscrupulous priest. She had always been vain of her boy's abilities, and now she believed him destined to be a great man; but oh, she would have him great and distinguished in his own faith, and among his own people. But it began to seem not quite so terrible a thing to read the Bible—



and when, one evening, Michael requested Connell to bring out his Testament, and read a chapter to him for the curiosity of the thing, she made no strenuous objection, but listened with patience, and even a degree of interest she would have been unwilling to acknowledge.



## CHAPTER XI.

FATHER GASHEEN had preached almost to the bare walls, without being fully aware of what detained so many of his parishioners from their usual places in church. When he learned the truth of the matter, he hardly knew whether to be angry or not; he felt, however, so confident of his influence among his people, and believed that his power over them was so unquestionable, that he dismissed any anxiety on the subject, believing that the leaven of his good counsel was working well. He thought he could trust his *friends* to bring about his purposes, whatever they might be. But the appointment for the next Sabbath he objected to; it might lead to consequences unthought of, and therefore unprepared for; especially if the lad won upon the favor of the people, as he was very likely to do. That plan must be baffled. He was just

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maturing his mode of procedure, when an imperative summons on some important clerical errand to a distant city, where he was detained ten or twelve days, completely frustrated his determination.

The week ran on,—the Sabbath morning came again,—the people gathered once more before Michael's cottage door. Connell's young Christian heart was warmed and expanded. Oh how he longed to give adequate expression to the mighty subject of salvation by God's free grace, manifested in the gift of an all-sufficient Saviour! Oh how he longed to tell the peace and joy of his own soul, and to utter a word,—or breathe a thought, which might induce some of these friends and neighbors to seek and find what he had sought and found.

This fervor of feeling imparted a subdued and beautiful solemnity and earnestness to his voice and manner, while it kindled his eye and loosed his tongue; and on that memorable morning, words were read and spoken, whose unutterable value to a few humble souls, only the records of

eternity can adequately disclose. The Word of God in the lips of that young man, and accompanied by his own simple comments and affectionate appeals, produced an effect altogether unexpected. It was as the "fire and the hammer which breaketh the rock in pieces." Tears of penitence flowed from "eyes that mocked at tears before," as well as from the more gentle and susceptible. And to many who earnestly asked with the heart smitten jailer, "What shall I do to be saved?" the sublimely simple direction, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," came with a power and authority they might not question or resist. The Spirit of God was there,—the commandments of God, so often made of none effect by man's tradition, were brought home to the awakening conscience by his divine energy, and forms, and creeds, and doctrines, and dogmas of men, were forgotten. None asked, that Sabbath morning, "what saith the Church, the Pope, or the priest?" but "What saith the Lord?"

Among those most deeply affected by

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this simple presentation of the 'Truth as it is in Jesus,' was Michael Carrisforth. The sword of the Spirit penetrated to the depths of his soul; nor was it long before he could clearly apprehend, and believingly realize, the blessedness of that great truth,—“Being justified freely by his grace, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.” And a happy time it was for him, and for many of his neighbors, when they could rejoice together in hope of the glory of God.

Meeting after meeting was held during the absence of Father Gasheen, and the “Word of God had free course, and was glorified.” When at last he did return to his charge, the “Bible party,” and the “Bible influence,” was quite too strong for him to overthrow; although he did what he could to put them down. Once or twice a slight disturbance was set on foot through his suggestion, but it was promptly quelled by the cool determination of Michael and his friends, and thenceforth the “Bible reform” went steadily onward, with our young friend Connell at its head; who

grew in wisdom, as he grew in years, and in favor with God and man.

In due time he was permitted to rejoice in the conversion of every member of his father's household. Bessie was the last to yield her heart to the influence of that grace, which bringeth salvation. But the surrender was hearty and unwavering, when at length it was made.

From the first, the good Mr. Bentley had watched the progress of this singularly interesting reformation, with intense solicitude. He noted with pious wonder the simple instrumentalities, which God had used in bringing it about, and resolved never to lose an opportunity of addressing a serious word to any willing ear; and to have a more constant, practical, and believing reference to the precept: "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand, for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, this or that, or if they shall be alike good."

More and more he resolved to depend on the efficacy of the Spirit of God accom-

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panying his divine Word, and to do what he could to extend the knowledge of that void which is as "a well of water springing up unto everlasting life." He procured a quantity of Testaments, and supplied every family in the Carrisforth neighborhood who would on any terms receive them; and had the satisfaction to know that they essentially aided and deepened the religious feeling of the community, and furnished to many earnest seekers after truth, a firm and safe basis on which to build a correct religious faith. In vain Father Gasheen fretted, forbade, denounced, and threatened; the truth which maketh free, had been revealed among that people, and they were becoming "free indeed," in the liberty of the children of God.

## CHAPTER XII.

A FEW words more will bring to a close our story of the "Borrowed Bible." Its influences near and remote, we may hope will furnish a theme of gratitude and praise for many a saved soul in eternity; and of encouragement for many an humble laborer in the Lord's vineyard here.

The progress of the revival of which this same "borrowed Bible" was the origin and instrument, developed abilities in our young friend Connell of a rare order; which united with a well tempered zeal, and an uncommonly winning address, seemed to combine peculiar elements of usefulness, and adaptation to public life. By Mr. Bentley's cordial recommendation therefore, and the free consent of his parents, he entered on a course of study preparatory to the ministry, and in a few years commenced



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his labors as an "ambassador for Christ." For more than twenty years he wrought, with a diligence and prudence in his Master's service, which was rewarded with abundant success. To the poor and lowly among his own people, he chiefly addressed his efforts, and from them a great harvest of regenerate souls was won, which shall one day "shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father," though unknown, or despised, or overlooked, on earth.

But "he that will live godly shall suffer persecution." God frequently allows the most earnest and faithful of his servants to endure the fiercest of trials, and through much tribulation receives them to the inheritance of the sanctified. Thus it was with the subject of our sketch. There were times in his ministry, when he might almost literally have used Paul's description of the trials and dangers that beset him. "In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the

heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils among false brethren,—in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness.” But none of these things moved him, neither counted he his life dear to himself, if he might by any means seek out some poor wanderer, and bring him into the safe-fold of his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Every thing that could be done by the church of Rome to foil his efforts, and subvert the Bible influence he so magnified, was attempted; every obstacle thrown in his way, that malice could invent, or ingenuity devise; but he went calmly on, remembering that the wrath of man is made to praise God; and truly so he found it.

Affliction and bereavement were also among the severest means by which the Father of spirits thought fit to test the constancy of his servant. One by one, the little household band to which he was so devotedly attached, (and which was doubly

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dear when all could say "thy people are my people, and thy God my God,") melted away from earth;—some by lingering disease, some by accident, some by violence, till he was left utterly alone,—and yet he was not alone, "For lo, *I* am with you always, even unto the end of the world!"

After these events, these years of toil and self-sacrifice at home, urgent invitations from across the waters, whither thousands of his countrymen had gone and found freedom and a home, began to move Connell to follow, and labor among them in the land of their adoption. He laid his plan before wise and pious friends, and it met their hearty approval. In a few weeks arrangements were made, and in company with another faithful and devoted servant of Christ, he quitted his native Ireland forever, consecrating the remainder of his life to the spiritual welfare of his brethren according to the flesh, in this great country of America.

That his labors and prayers may assist

many in throwing off the fetters of Romanism, and assuming the "light burden," and "easy yoke" of Him, whose rich grace is revealed only in *the Bible*, will, we hope, be the sincere desire of all who read these pages. The work is done, if the Bible can but be made a light to their feet, and a lamp to their path.

THE END.

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